


COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT
INFORMATIONAL MEMO

TO: CHIEF GEOFF JONES 

FROM: SGT. SCOTT ALPERS

REF: 2019 BIAS POLICING ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

DATE: JUNE 30, 2020

The following report was completed for compliance with CALEA standards regarding Bias Policing. The CALEA standards for bias policing are as follows:

The agency has a written directive governing biased policing and, at a minimum, includes the following provisions:

- a. a prohibition against biased based policing;
- b. initial training and annual training for affected personnel in biased issues including legal aspects; and
- c. a documented annual administrative review of agency practices including citizen concerns and any corrective measures taken.

This report will focus on subsection (c). This report includes traffic stop data from both the Missouri Attorney General's Office Annual Report (2019) and internally maintained data at CPD, as well as data regarding internal and external complaints where bias based policing or racial profiling was alleged.

Policy:

The Columbia Police Department Policy Manual contains Policy 402, Bias-Free Policing. The policy, signed by all officers and available on PowerDMS, reiterates the department's commitment to bias-free policing and the strict prohibition of the practice of bias-based policing. Due to this department's CALEA self-assessment process, Policy 402 was revised in 2018 to include a requirement of an annual review of department practices, bias policing data, and citizen concerns.

Complaints:

During the twelve month period, the Columbia Police Department received 2 external complaints or concerns alleging biased policing or racial profiling. The complaints are summarized as follows:

Number	Date	Type of Encounter	Disposition	Result
EX2019-0003	02/05/2019	MVA / DWI	Unfounded	N/A
EX2019-0045	09/23/2019	Suspicious Person	Unfounded	N/A

The following complaints alleged racial/bias-based policing against two or more officers in a single incident:

EX2019-0003 (2)

Of the 2 total complaints alleging racial/bias-based profiling, none were sustained. The 2 complaints included a total of 3 officers. There is no pattern or trend emerging for nature of contact which led to the complaint of racial/bias-based profiling. I also did not find a pattern or trend regarding specific officers.

Traffic Stop Data

Missouri Attorney General's Office:

The report compiled by the Missouri Attorney General's Office mirrors the information collected internally. The disparity indices listed in the report are as follows: Black 3.51, American Indian 1.66, White 0.76, Hispanic 0.55, Other 0.43 and Asian 0.49. The Missouri Attorney General's Office also provides historical data on disparity indices back to the year 2000.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Asian	0.31	0.39	0.49	0.47	0.42	0.43	0.48	0.45	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.44	0.46	0.45	0.50	0.47	0.51	0.56	0.49	0.33
Black	2.14	2.28	2.24	2.20	2.26	2.19	2.20	2.33	2.23	2.09	2.02	1.99	2.26	2.29	2.45	2.97	3.13	3.28	2.92	3.51
Hispanic	0.52	0.60	0.57	0.56	0.61	0.82	0.96	0.91	0.68	0.57	0.48	0.39	0.46	0.44	0.43	0.52	0.56	0.62	0.69	0.55
American Indian	0.18	0.15	0.21	0.09	0.13	0.05	0.14	0.11	0.10	0.13	0.09	0.07	0.15	0.10	0.27	0.36	0.16	0.21	0.62	1.66
White	0.92	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.90	0.88	0.90	0.92	0.93	0.96	0.92	0.91	0.89	0.82	0.79	0.76	0.80	0.76
Other	0.96	0.53	0.64	0.74	0.54	0.47	0.35	0.40	0.31	0.38	0.37	0.29	0.30	0.40	0.51	0.65	0.87	0.94	1.20	0.43

The 2019 disparity numbers had a sizeable increase for the Black and American Indian drivers. There was a sizeable decrease for Asian, Hispanic and "Other" drivers. The disparity level for White drivers decreased but remained in line with the previous five (5) years.

Columbia Police Department:

I also reviewed traffic stop data broken down by officer, with officer identity removed. This was done to identify any areas of concern or potential patterns in the data consistent with CALEA standards. Approximately 48% of officers making at least one (1) traffic stop in 2019 generated disparity indices for black drivers at or above the department-wide disparity index of 2.92. The 48% accounted for just over 50% of all traffic stops made in the department.

CPD recently added required information on traffic stop data to include whether the race of the driver was known at the time of the stop. This information is not required by statute and is not reported to the Missouri Attorney General's Office as part of their Vehicle Stop Report, released annually.

On April 23, 2019, Chief Geoff Jones appointed the vehicle stop committee. The committee addresses disparities in Columbia's vehicle stop rates by:

- Examining existing data
- Identifying variables affecting an officer's decision to stop a vehicle

- Finding solutions, methods or process to fill data gaps
- Setting a timeline for research
- Identifying policing training / best practices that should be examined for changes
- Reaching consensus on recommendations proposed to Chief Geoff Jones

The committee meets each month and is composed of community members, individuals from public interest groups, a Columbia Police Department trainer and a Columbia Police Officer.

Training:

Policy 402 requires that all new employees will receive bias-free policing training during orientation, which typically occurs within the first 2-3 weeks upon being sworn as an officer (402.4). The policy also requires annual training in bias-policing issues (402.4). In 2019, Bias-Free Policing training requirements were satisfied by department-wide participation in on-line training courses. In 2019, all members of the department completed Cultural Competency: Racial Profiling and Implicit Bias, which was a POST certified course provided by the Missouri Police Chiefs Association. All members were tested over the presented information with a minimum score required to pass. Training is planned for later in 2019 to comply with the annual training requirement of Policy 402.

Conclusion:

Bias policing is a topic which needs continuous conversations involving interested parties, stakeholders, the community, and the department. Department leaders have acknowledged the disparity index numbers and a need to take a closer look at the data. The limitations on the data collected must also be weighed in the totality of circumstances. A significant contributing factor to the disparity numbers is likely the dissolution of the department's Traffic Unit. While not the sole explanation, the elimination of the unit greatly decreased the total number of traffic stops being conducted as well as city-wide enforcement. In efforts to proactively address the disparity numbers, the leadership of the department has hosted meetings regarding the traffic stop data information and spearheaded the formation of a committee dedicated to addressing the indices. The committee is comprised of both department leadership and community stakeholders. The meetings are open to the entire community. With the addition of "race known at time of stop" to the collected information, the 2019 information may be framed in a different light. After conducting this analysis, I do not see a need to revise our policy or training requirements related to bias-free policing. In evaluating all of the data available to me, I have not identified any specific patterns giving rise to a concern regarding the application of the Bias-Free Policing Policy.